Other Projects

The President's Budget for FY 2007 includes five other projects for funding under the New Starts program. Four of these projects are not advanced to the point of being considered for an FFGA at this time, but demonstrate that they are making progress towards consideration for an FFGA in the near future. Each of these projects is rated *Medium* or higher; possesses a *Medium* or better cost effectiveness rating or is exempted from the requirement for a *Medium* cost effectiveness rating; and is expected to be in final design by the Spring of 2006, assuming satisfactory resolution of any outstanding issues. These projects include: the Second Avenue Subway MOS project in New York City, New York; the Norfolk LRT project in Norfolk, Virginia; the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project – Extension to Wiehle Avenue in Northern Virginia; and the University Link LRT Extension project in Seattle, Washington. An additional project recommended for funding is the Largo Metrorail Extension, which completed an FFGA in FY 2005 and began revenue service in December 2004. Section 3043(a)(31) and 3043(j) of SAFETEA-LU authorizes the inclusion of an additional 52 rapid rail cars in the Largo Metrorail Extension FFGA. By this mandate, FTA has included the Largo Metrorail Extension in this category of funded projects, even though the original FFGA has been completed and revenue service for the project has begun.

A total of $101.86 million in New Starts funding is reserved in FY 2007 for these five projects. By reserving funds for this group of projects without specifying a specific amount for any single project at this time, project sponsors will be able to better align their project development process with the Congressional appropriations cycle. This will also allow FTA to take advantage of its project oversight and risk management activities to make project-specific recommendations when Congress is considering appropriations decisions. FTA notes that some of these projects must still complete the NEPA process; still others must address FTA-identified concerns related to capital costs and/or scope definition. Consequently, FTA acknowledges that one or more of these projects may not be ready for a specific funding recommendation in FY 2007. Summary descriptions of these five projects are presented alphabetically by state below. More detailed descriptions of all but the Largo Metrorail Extension project are provided in Appendix A.

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area: Largo Metrorail Extension
In FY 2005, FTA completed funding for the Largo Metrorail Extension project, which was constructed jointly between the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The project began revenue service in December 2004.

The project extends the Blue Line of the Washington Metrorail system from the Addison Road station to Largo Town Center in Prince George's County, Maryland. The 3.1 mile, two-station extension is operated by WMATA as an integral part of the regional Metrorail system, providing access to downtown Washington, D.C. and surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. The line follows an alignment through central Prince George's County that has been preserved as a rail transit corridor in the county's Master Plan. The two new stations are located at the Morgan Boulevard station, north of MD-

214 (Central Avenue), and at the Largo Town Center just outside the Capital Beltway (Interstate-95/495).

Sections 3043(a)(31) and 3043(j) of SAFETEA-LU authorizes the inclusion of an additional 52 rapid rail cars in the Largo Metrorail Extension. FTA included the Largo Metrorail Extension in this proposed funding category even though the original Full Funding Grant Agreement has been completed and revenue service for the project has begun.

The original total capital cost estimate for the project was $433.87 million, with $260.3 million in Section 5309 New Starts funding, which accounted for 60% of the overall project cost.

New York: New York/Second Avenue Subway MOS

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority and New York City Transit (MTA/NYCT) are proposing to construct 2.3 miles of new subway on Manhattan's East Side to provide extended Broadway express service between Brooklyn, Lower Manhattan, West Midtown, and East Harlem. The Second Avenue Subway Minimum Operable Segment (MOS) would extend MTA rail service from its current terminal at 57th Street and Seventh Avenue via an existing track connection to the 63rd Street line, with new stations at 96th, 86th, and 72nd Streets and new entrances at Third Avenue to the existing Lexington Avenue/63rd Street station. New tunnels would be built from 99th Street to 62nd Street, while the existing tunnel between 99th and 105th Streets would be used for train storage. The MOS is the first part of a planned 8.5-mile subway line extending the length of Manhattan's East Side from 125th Street in East Harlem to Hanover Square in the Financial District.

Under current conditions, the Lexington Avenue Line (LAL) experiences significant travel-time delays as crowded trains wait in stations while large volumes of riders board and alight. During a 15-minute period in the morning peak hour at the 86th Street station, nearly 3,000 riders enter and exit southbound trains, causing excessive crowding on platforms and queuing on stairs. The Second Avenue Subway MOS is intended to reduce this excessive overcrowding on North America's busiest transit line; improve service reliability on the LAL; improve mobility for commuters on the Manhattan's East Side; and meet existing and future travel demand throughout the corridor and region.

MTA/NYCT completed a major investment study (MIS)/Draft EIS on the Manhattan East Side Corridor in September 1999. The MIS/Draft EIS covered the northern portion of the corridor from 63rd Street to East 125th Street. The full 8.5-mile Second Avenue Subway was selected as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) in May 2001. FTA approved the LPA into PE in December 2001. Anticipating the financial difficulties in implementing the entire project at once, MTA/NYCT contemplated the development of minimum operable segments within the corridor. A Final EIS covering the full alignment, but including a strategy for the implementation of distinct operable segments within the corridor, was completed in April 2004. In July 2004, FTA issued an environmental Record of Decision for the full-length project. MTA has submitted a final

design request for the Second Avenue Subway MOS, which FTA is currently reviewing and expects to approve in early 2006. Revenue operations for the first MOS are planned for 2012.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(21) authorizes the New York Second Avenue Subway MOS project for final design and construction. The capital cost for the 2.3-mile Second Avenue Subway MOS is estimated to be $4,947.8 million, including $1,109.3 million in finance costs. MTA is seeking $1,300.00 million, or approximately 26 percent of total project costs, in New Starts funding. FTA notes that MTA's New Starts funding request is higher than what has historically been provided by FTA to other major transit capital investment projects, but the New Starts share of 26 percent is significantly lower than most other proposed projects. Through FY 2006, Congress has appropriated $33.42 million in New Starts funding for this project.

Virginia: Norfolk/Norfolk LRT

Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) is proposing to construct and operate an 11-station, 7.4-mile light rail transit (LRT) line within the city of Norfolk that is intended to serve as the initial segment of a regional rapid transit system. The project alignment would begin at the Eastern Virginia Medical Center, move eastward as a dedicated in-street guideway through downtown Norfolk to Norfolk State University, and continue along an abandoned Norfolk Southern Railroad right-of-way (ROW) parallel to Interstate-264 (I-264), to the eastern terminus at Newtown Road. Park-and-ride access to the system would be provided by the construction of new facilities at Newtown Road, Military Highway, and Ballantine Boulevard, as well as shared use of existing parking facilities at the Harbor Park baseball stadium on the southeastern fringe of downtown, where a station is planned. The project scope also includes an LRT maintenance facility and the purchase of nine vehicles.

Travel forecasts indicate worsened congestion on I-264 and major arterials (Brambleton Avenue, Virginia Beach Boulevard, Tidewater Drive) within the project corridor through 2025. Options for improving mobility within the area are limited by geographic constraints (numerous waterways) and the absence of transportation rights-of-way. The Norfolk LRT project takes advantage of an abandoned rail ROW and is intended to help meet future travel demand to downtown Norfolk and throughout the corridor, provide improved mobility for transit-dependent populations, and achieve local land use goals. The project is further intended to provide a rapid transit connection from Harbor Park and other fringe park-and-ride facilities to destinations within the downtown area.

In 1997, FTA first approved an 18-mile LRT system extending between the cities of Norfolk and Virginia Beach into PE. The Draft EIS for the project was completed in April 1999. In November 1999, Virginia Beach voters did not approve a local funding measure for the project, resulting in the truncation of the project at Kempsville Road within the city limits of Norfolk. FTA approved the abridged project into PE in October 2002. A Supplemental Draft EIS was completed in January 2003. Since that time, HRT has undertaken additional scope and cost reductions that have resulted in the current 7.4-mile alignment. The Final EIS was published in October 2005 reflecting FTA concerns

relative to ridership and cost assumptions. A Record of Decision for the project is anticipated in early 2006. Revenue operations are anticipated to begin in December 2008.

In October 2005, the Norfolk City Council adopted a parking policy in anticipation of the LRT project which is intended to put limits on the downtown parking supply. These limits are further intended to result in a measurable parking deficit in the future, which was assumed in the project's forecast of travel-time benefits. FTA required that such parking restrictions be implemented prior to accepting the project's travel forecast for the purposes of approving final design. FTA is reviewing the City's parking policy to ensure that it will result in the realization of the assumed parking deficit. FTA further notes that the project's current cost estimate is significantly lower than any other comparable LRT system currently under construction, and FTA intends to perform an assessment of the reliability of the project's cost and schedule prior to advancing the project.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(22) authorizes the Norfolk LRT project for final design and construction. The capital cost for the 7.4-mile Norfolk LRT is estimated to be $203.7 million, of which HRT is seeking $99.8 million, or 49 percent, in New Starts funding. Through FY 2006, Congress has appropriated $12.90 million in New Starts funding for this project.

Virginia: Northern Virginia/Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project – Extension to Wiehle Avenue

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) in cooperation with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is proposing to construct an 11.6-mile extension of the region's Metrorail system from the existing East Falls Church Metrorail station through the large Tysons Corner employment and retail center to Wiehle Avenue in the Reston area of Fairfax County. The project will be operated as a separate Metrorail line under a new service configuration that terminates in Washington DC at the existing Stadium Armory Metrorail station. The proposed project scope includes construction of five new stations, a major park-and-ride lot at Wiehle Avenue, and expanded storage capacity at WMATA's West Falls Church rail yard. The project also includes the purchase of 64 heavy rail vehicles. The extension would be operated by WMATA, with trains operating at seven minute peak frequencies from the Wiehle Avenue station through East Falls Church, continuing along the existing Metrorail Orange Line track east through Arlington County, downtown Washington DC, Capitol Hill, and terminating at Stadium Armory. The 11.6-mile extension is the first minimum operable segment (MOS) of a proposed 23.1-mile extension of Metrorail west to Dulles International Airport and Loudoun County.

The Tysons Corner area contains over 25 million square feet of office space and 110,000 employees. Redevelopment and expansion of the major retail and office development is underway. The Reston area also contains significant mixed-use development, with a substantial employment base and large residential population, many of whom commute to employment sites in Washington D.C. The primary transportation arteries that serve this rapidly growing area are Routes 267 (the Dulles Toll Road) and 7, both of which experience significant congestion during peak hours. The proposed Metrorail extension

would expand transportation capacity to and from Reston and the Tysons Corner regional activity centers, (including reverse commute trips) while providing a direct rail link for commuters from northwest Fairfax and Loudoun Counties to employment opportunities in Tysons Corner, the Rosslyn - Ballston corridor, downtown Washington DC, and other locations adjacent to stations along the 106-mile Metrorail system.

In November 2002, a 23.1-mile Metrorail extension to Route 772 in Loudoun County replaced a previously-identified bus rapid transit system as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) in the Dulles Corridor. Based upon FTA and local concerns that the full LPA would be too costly to implement at one time, VDRPT and WMATA identified an MOS terminating at Wiehle Avenue. FTA approved a Supplemental Draft EIS in October 2003 reflecting the Wiehle Avenue MOS. FTA approved VDRPT's request to initiate PE for the Extension to Wiehle Avenue project in June 2004. VDRPT received a record of decision on the Final EIS that covers both the MOS and Loudoun County extension in April 2005. VDRPT is currently undertaking an environmental assessment of recent project scope changes that will require an amended environmental Record of Decision. This work is anticipated to be completed in early 2006. Revenue operations for the project is scheduled for 2011.

VDRPT's cost estimate assumes several scope modifications which require further design to mitigate uncertainties in the project cost and contingency level. FTA intends to perform an assessment of the reliability of the project's cost and schedule prior to advancing it into final design.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(23) authorizes the Dulles Corridor Extension to Wiehle Avenue project for final design and construction. The capital cost for the 11.6-mile project is estimated to be $1,840.1 million, of which VDRPT is seeking $920.0 million, or 50 percent, in New Starts funding. FTA notes that VDRPT's New Starts funding request is higher than what has historically been provided by FTA to other major transit capital investment projects. Through FY 2006, Congress has appropriated $215.63 million in New Starts funding for this project.

Washington: Seattle/University Link LRT Extension

The Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, commonly known as Sound Transit, is proposing to implement an all-tunnel extension of the Central Link light rail transit (LRT) Initial Segment, currently under construction from the Segment's northern terminus at Westlake Station in downtown Seattle to the University of Washington, 3.1 miles to the northeast. University Link is the first phase of Sound Transit's planned North Link LRT extension to the Northgate Transit Center in North Seattle.

The University Link corridor is the most densely developed residential and employment area in the Central Puget Sound region and the state of Washington. The three largest urban centers in the state – downtown Seattle, Capitol Hill/First Hill, and the University District – are located along the University Link alignment. However, travel by private vehicle and bus between these areas is extremely congested due to high traffic volumes

and the corridor's unique physical geography. First Hill and Capitol Hill rise sharply northeast of downtown Seattle, and
Interstate 5 (I-5) – the region's primary north-south freeway corridor – runs along the base of these hills, separating them from downtown. The steep grades and limited crossing points of I-5 exacerbate congestion between downtown and the First Hill/Capitol Hill urban center. Farther to the north, the University District is separated from the rest of the corridor by Portage Bay and the Lake Washington Ship Canal; only three river crossings (two of them drawbridges) connect the University with the southern portion of the corridor.

Furthermore, while I-5 north of downtown features reversible express lanes to accommodate morning inbound and evening outbound travel, the significant, and growing, reverse-commute market between downtown (and points south) and Capitol Hill/First Hill and the University District enjoys no such advantage, resulting in a substantial disparity between northbound and southbound transit travel times during peak periods. The University Link LRT Extension is intended to provide more reliable and faster bi-directional transit service to and between these urban centers, while supporting local land use goals and contributing to the maintenance of 1990 traffic levels at the University of Washington, which, by prior agreement, is necessary for the City of Seattle to approve any new campus development.

The University Link LRT Extension is part of the Central Link LRT system that has been in planning for more than two decades. Due to financial constraints, Sound Transit is implementing the Central Link LRT system in segments. An "Initial Segment" of the project runs from the Westlake Station of the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel south to Tukwila; this project alignment is currently being constructed under an FFGA executed by FTA in October 2003. The North Link segment would connect the Initial Segment's northern terminus with the Northgate Transit Center. Sound Transit completed a Draft Supplemental EIS for North Link in December 2003. The Sound Transit Board selected the locally preferred alternative for North Link in July 2005, and the following month selected the 3.1-mile University Link Extension as the first phase of the implementation of North Link. FTA issued a limited-scope Draft Supplemental EIS in October 2005 to address changes in the preferred alternative, including an alternative route through the University of Washington. FTA notified Congress of its intent to approve PE for the project in November 2005; this approval is assumed in December 2005. Sound Transit is currently completing the Final EIS for North Link, including the University Link project, with a Record of Decision anticipated in Spring 2006. Sound Transit must address a number of issues related to its technical capacity to effectively manage the implementation of the University Link project and other capital investment projects (including the Initial Segment of the Central Link LRT system) prior to its approval to advance into final design. Revenue operations for University Link are scheduled for 2016.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(c)(231) authorizes the Seattle Link LRT Extensions project for alternatives analysis and preliminary engineering. The capital cost of the University Link is estimated to be approximately $1,720.0 million of which Sound Transit is seeking

$700.0 million, or 41 percent, in New Starts funding. Through FY 2006, Congress has not appropriated New Starts funding for the University Link LRT Extension.